

Published in **Forbidden Realms**

Lyam Thomas Christopher

[Follow](#)Feb 24, 2019 · 24 min read · ✨ · [Listen](#)[Save](#)

...

# The Secret of the Raja

## Magical Evocation: Part 1



here once was a young man who fed himself to a tiger. Or so the story goes. It happened almost 3,000 years ago in what is today known as India. Prince Mahasattva was out walking in the forest with one of his disciples. The two men came to the edge of a cliff to survey the landscape below. At the cliff's base, they spied a starving tiger with her cubs. So desperately hungry was the tigress that she was about to eat her own babies. The prince didn't have long to act. He sent his disciple into the trees to hunt for some game while he himself stayed behind to contemplate the scene.

The prince stepped up to the cliff's edge. The drop before him was sudden and deep. It dizzied him. A sweaty chill surged up his back, and his fingers and toes tensed at the thought of accidentally slipping over the edge. He had so much to lose if he should fall. Not only was he the son of a great king — not only a wealthy young man with his whole life ahead of him — but he was also a practicing ascetic, a holy man who had become famous and well loved by his people. Prayer and meditation had purified his soul to such a degree that he had acquired miraculous healing powers. And he was capable of brave feats of self-sacrifice.

Or was he?

His heart thumped audibly in his chest. Was it beating for the tiger's sake or for his? He couldn't tell. He looked down helplessly as the poor, emaciated mother licked her cubs. She was torn between her two strongest instincts: the need to care for her offspring and the demands of her own survival. The Lords of Compassion were testing him—he knew it. And so, Prince Mahasattva, hesitating then no longer, stepped over the edge of the cliff and fell to his death.

The tiger hissed and growled. And then pounced on his broken body, sinking her fangs into his belly, tearing the still-warm, quivering flesh from his bones. Within hours, the tiger's breasts began to fill with milk. She was able to feed her cubs again.

This strange drama may have actually happened. Who knows? Was the prince really so meek and kind that he was able to give up his life for the tiger? My opinion is that such stories, in their original forms, were not just stories. They were not just moral lessons on compassion and self-sacrifice. They were magical rituals. Guided visualizations, if you like. Such formulas were memorized, rehearsed, and reenacted by shamans and

sorcerers. But religion eventually came along and cleansed these dramatic rituals of magic, rewriting them into children's stories.

Suppose now that we tell Prince Mahasattva's story a different way. The prince is not a holy man. He is a sorcerer. A magician. And he is royalty, so the kingdom's prohibitions against magic do not apply to him. He practices the ancient, forbidden rites of his all-but-forgotten forefathers, and it is his habit to venture into the royal forest every evening, light a ritual fire, and conjure a tiger spirit. He then visualizes himself being eaten alive! To put it simply, he feeds himself to his greatest fear.

As the prince practices this strange, macabre ritual night after night, something unexpected happens. He becomes less and less afraid in the face of his own death. He becomes bolder and better able to command his troops. He becomes well respected and unflinching in the face of discomfort, whether he is hunting a wild boar in his forest or sitting across the negotiating table from a rival prince.

My version of the prince's story is about a sorcerer who ventures into a dark forest to benefit from his practice of the black arts, so it's not the kind of story a mother would have told her child. Or the kind that the religious authorities would have disseminated to their congregations. First of all, it reveals a secret magical technique, and magic had become forbidden to everyone except the ruling classes. Secondly, such a story would have given commoners a strategy for becoming personally more powerful. For developing fearlessness in the face of oppression. For developing the personality traits of the ruling class. If ordinary citizens were to adopt the prince's magical routine, they might become unruly dissenters who are difficult to control. And we can't have that now, can we?

Religion *can* be a good thing. It has done away with the Prince's "selfish," self-empowering forms of magic for a good reason. It has rewritten and moralized his presence in history and inspired countless Hindus and Buddhists to become more compassionate citizens, making the world a better place. However, there's a dark side to religion. It has redesigned the original magical formula for its own purposes. To make its believers more docile and manageable. To make us meek and kind. To tame us and drain us of power so that we become obedient servants of society.

Thousands of years ago, when the first city states arose, sorcerers were a problem. These sorcerers were the shamans from our old hunter-gatherer days, of course, and these shamans were in contact with nature spirits. They refused to conform to an unnatural urban lifestyle. To remedy this, the city's king and his counselors appointed priests to take over the shamans' old responsibilities as mediators between the spirit world and physical world. Once the shamans were dispensed with (that is, banished or killed), whom do you suppose these new priests served? The people? The ancient spirits of their forefathers? No, not really. They served the new order, that of the city state and its new gods of agriculture, industry, and territorial conquest. And the priests' job, now, was to keep the city's population peaceful, pacified, and hard-working — to generate wealth for their king. To accomplish this, the priests imposed a new, counterfeit form of spirituality: religion.

The priests took the shamans' old rituals and regimens, the magical formulas that were originally designed for increasing personal power, and turned them into children's stories about kindness and conformity. Any practice of "the old ways" was strictly prohibited. Meditation became worship, an act of prostration and submission. Magical incantations became prayers, in which worshipers groveled and begged for the favor of their new gods. Ritual dances became formalized, carefully monitored, and controlled. Sex, because of its mind-altering potentials, became sin (unless used strictly for procreation). The science of fasting and breath-holding were lost — or at best reformulated into methods for purging oneself of bad behavior. Mind-altering plants were outlawed.

When religion has revised the magical practices of our prehistoric ancestors and turned them into a system of conformity, whom does it serve? We do benefit in some ways, right? We become morally sensitive, and we learn to live harmoniously with one another in a densely populated, agriculturally supported city state. But what have we lost in the revision?

The story of Prince Mahasattva is just one example of how religion, in its attempt to establish civility, replaces empowering rituals with disempowering ones. It replaces magical formulas with morality tales. And it demands that we believe in those revisions not as magical spells but as historical events on the pages of a history book. There are endless examples of these revisions all around us...

## Magical Formulas “Mythologized Away”

**From Christianity:** In Christian myth, Jesus resurrects Lazarus. Literally brings him back from the dead. Do you think Jesus really did that? Seriously? There were many such “resurrection” rituals conducted back then. They were not literal resurrections, of course. They were initiation ceremonies.

The candidate, when his teachers thought him ready, would enter a tomb and get sealed up in utter darkness, facing the ominous silence and looming reality of his own death. If the ritual was successful, the candidate would emerge from the tomb “miraculously” and get consecrated to a new kind of life. He would make peace with death and no longer be haunted day after day by the spectre of his own mortality. He was then free to live his life without fear.



Ritualized Death and Rebirth

Even though the laws of most lands forbade this kind of magic, the law could not control everyone. It simply drove such practices underground into secret societies. Many such secret clubs attempted to preserve the magic of the old ways. The magic of

shamans that civilization had eradicated so long ago still lived on in the shadows. It is rumored that Jesus was a member of one such underground society (the Nazarenes), just as his infamous rival, Simon Magus, was.

And perhaps Jesus presided over one such forbidden resurrection ceremony. It was likely a rite of passage in which his prized student, Lazarus, died symbolically and emerged reborn. Lazarus got “born again,” as one might say today. He left behind his old life, and Jesus consecrated him to a new one, a new level of spiritual awareness. A more powerful level of awareness.

Not long afterward, Lazarus really did die. Some historical accounts say that he was beheaded by political zealots. Perhaps he had become a threat to the civil authorities because he was no longer afraid of them.

V for Vendetta - Evey Reborn scene



Ritualized Death and Rebirth (From the movie \*V for Vendetta,\* 2005)

**From Buddhism:** In Asian mythology, the Buddha places an empty clay dish on the surface of the Niranjana River. “If I can reach enlightenment,” he announces, “may this bowl float upstream.” He releases the bowl, and it magically floats upstream, against the current of the river. Did this really happen? Perhaps such a story was taken from one of the Buddha’s own guided visualization practices, in which the human mind is

envisioned as an enclosed vessel returning upstream to disappear into its divine source.

The Buddha would sit on the bare earth and concentrate on his nervous system's continuous "river" of images. He would draw his attention inward and upward, away from the outward phantoms of the mind, exploring the "stream" of his own inner consciousness. This practice sometimes involved a fantasy schematic of the spinal column and the various chakra waypoints. The yogi would concentrate on levitating "upstream," proceeding up his spine to the top of his head, probing inward, into the downward flow of his own reality-creating faculties, searching for the source of it all. In the process, he learned to disengage from the external objects of fear and desire, to stop being intimidated by outward appearances. He became fearless.

But suppose we now rewrite this magical formula, turning it into a story that is *not* about our *own* power but about the *Buddha's* "holy miracle." The empowering aspect of a guided visualization practice is thereby removed, and all the power is now enshrined within the Buddha himself who is sitting on a glowing, golden lotus-throne. He is unearthly now. Elevated above us. Beyond us. Supernatural. A celestial king. He sits in a place too beautiful and too powerful for ordinary people like you and me to reach. Our power to enlighten ourselves (the Tantric visualization formula) has been taken away and locked up in an idol to be worshiped. This morally cleansed version of the Buddha can then be used by priests to elicit awe and obedience from religious followers.

**From medieval alchemy:** In Europe, medieval alchemists turned lead into gold. Or did they? We can easily discredit the magic of alchemy when we revise it into a moral lesson about charlatans, scams, and the evils of lustng after gold. Are wealth and power really so evil? Or is that what religion tells you so that you will surrender your wealth and power to the ruling class. Alchemy, as a guided visualization practice, was actually something quite different from the production of a yellow metal. It was about power and wealth, oh yes, make no mistake! But what *is* power and wealth, really?

The lead-to-gold transformation of the alchemist was not a literal or chemical process. It was symbolic. Lead, mercury, copper, iron, tin, silver, and gold were stages of development in the alchemist's self-transformation. His own self-empowerment. His

transformation from something merely human to something more. Something “golden.” And again, something fearless...

Back to our story. It is unlikely that Prince Mahasattva — who was a *raja*, a warlord in command of armies — would attempt to make himself more meek, kind, and obedient. Nor would he commit suicide in order to give way to a rival predator. It is more likely he was using a secret magical technique to transform himself into a more capable ruler.

And now you know the raja’s secret. You can practice his magic formula and transform yourself from an obedient civil servant into something more. Something fearless. And *fearsome*. All that remains for us now is to hash out some of the details of his technique.

## Conjuring Daemons

The raja in my interpretation of his story is practicing evocation. He is conjuring a *daemon*. A *daemon* is a spirit, and I’m using the ancient Greek word for it to disassociate it from the misty, vaporous apparition that English speakers tend to associate with the word “spirit.” A *daemon* can be thought of as a *part* of the natural world, not something elsewhere as though there is a spirit world that is separate from our Earthly realm.

But of course, “daemon” is a scary word, right? *Daemons* have been *demonized* by religion for centuries. Contact with them is “forbidden by God,” and they will only bring about your destruction if you should use magic to conjure them up, right? Pay no attention to the priest behind the curtain.

A *daemon* is really a portion of humanity’s collective unconscious, and since you are human, you have every right to establish contact. A *daemon* is an ancient subroutine built into the “programming” of our species. A *daemon* is something that is even, perhaps, hardwired into us. But it is something that civilization has repressed and tried to get rid of. *Daemons* have slipped beneath our conscious awareness where they now control us from the shadows, often without our knowledge. You might even say that our animal instincts are *daemons*—though, to be clear, *daemons* can be much more than that. Sometimes they even represent previous stages in the evolution of our species.

But why would I refer to an instinct by such an exotic term as “daemon”? Well, when a daemon gets triggered, it sometimes appears as an image in the mind, as a phantom from our evolutionary past. Many such phantoms still live inside us and control us from the dark. When we prod them to the surface and face them, we can free ourselves (to some extent) from their power. Not only that, but we can claim some of their power as our own.

How can this be? Well, why does the average man fear snakes, even when he may have never even seen a snake before in his life? Why does Satan take the form of a serpent? The answer is not really so mysterious. Venomous snakes have killed more humans than any other animal in history. They have embedded themselves deeply into the collective consciousness of our species. Why do some people have an inexplicable hatred of cats? Especially black cats? Well, for about a million years or so, our prehistoric ancestors were (most likely) prayed upon by giant saber-toothed cats? In the dark of night! Hence the perceived evil and that hated darkness of *black* cats. Many of our “irrational” fears can be explained this way:

**Fear of snakes** — Countless ancestors have been killed by snake bites. Venomous snakes continue to be chief among the animals that kill the most humans every year.

**Fear of skeletons and zombies** — countless ancestors have had to deal with plagues and with the sight of their dead loved ones. Such traumatic images are buried deeply in our collective psyche.

**Fear of eyes in the dark** — There were predators in the night, their reflective eyes encroaching upon our campfires.

**Teeth and fangs** — This one is obvious. Countless ancestors have been mauled and eaten alive by cave bears and saber-toothed tigers. Not to mention bitten by venomous snakes.

**Fear of caves** — this image represents death because that's where we saw dead bodies being buried or entombed. Or perhaps that's where a man-hunting cave bear lived, surrounded by the bones of its prey.

**Fear of dogs** — Domestic dogs are descended from wolves, and how many of our ancestors have been hunted and killed by wolves?

**Claustrophobia** — countless ancestors have fallen into narrow cracks in the earth (Oh no! Timmy fell down a well!). Their fellow tribe members faced great difficulty in rescuing them and sometimes, in a fit of horror, had to give them up for dead.

**Small furry animals** — rat infestation and disease.

**Fear of spiders, roaches, and small holes** — same as above

**Fear of public speaking** — fear of being banished (or even executed) by your tribe. Banishment meant you would most likely die. The image of an audience — a crowd of onlookers — is often enough to trigger this ancient, nameless fear. I have a fear of executioner-like figures, and I sometimes feel afraid to speak up in a group—as though I am “sticking my neck out” or “going out on a limb.” An image of an executioner and his sword comes to my mind, and I wonder how many of my ancestors bore witness to horrific beheadings before a cheering crowd of crazed onlookers.

**Agoraphobia (fear of everything!)** — This is actually a fear of being exposed and out in the open. Out on the savanna, if you are out in the open, alone, you can be charged by a lion or a hyena from any direction. Or...in a storm, you can be struck by lightning when you are the tallest object in a wide-open space. Even in this day and age, being exposed and out in the open can be dangerous.

**Hydrophobia (Fear of water)** — drowning, of course. Some of our ancestors were freedivers, foraging for food in deep water. Or many never learned to swim, and that made pools of deep water deadly to them.

**Fear of heights** — People who do not have this fear probably have ancestors who thrived for many generations on flat land. When there is no great height to fall from, and no great depth to fall into, there is no need to fear falling anywhere. Some native Americans have no fear of heights, and their ancestors were probably plains Indians. Some Russians also have no such fear, so their ancestors probably thrived in the Russian Steppes for generation after generation.

**The boogeyman** — When our ancestors witnessed kidnappings, bludgeonings, or stabbings, most likely these acts of violence were committed by men. Men have typically been the hunters, soldiers, and the thugs of all tribes throughout history. They have specialized in killing, fighting, and aggressive posturing for over a million years.

And often, our ancient ancestors would experience their kind of violence at night — hence the rather common fear of large men. Especially the irrational fear of large, dark-skinned men.

**Fear of the dark** — this is similar to agoraphobia. A predator or an enemy can make easy pickings of you at night. An attack from a rival tribe would be most effective at night.

## Magical Evocation in Tibet

I've got an old paperback on my bookshelves, called *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. It's a true story about an adventurer named Alexandra David-Neel, a hearty French woman who traveled to Tibet in the early 1900s. She explored many places there, disguised as a native, and she did so long before the Chinese communists annexed it and destroyed its culture. Her amazing book is now almost the only known Western account of what the country was like when it was still untouched by modernity. In her book, she tells the story of her encounter with a magician out in the wilds — a magician practicing the magic of evocation.

Tibet is known in legend as “the Roof of the World.” It is located in an extremely elevated, isolated, and remote landscape. It has the highest average altitude of any territory on Earth. It is surrounded on all sides by even higher mountains, Mt. Everest towering among them. In such a remote and sparsely populated place, David-Neel saw that Tibet’s inhabitants were barely governed at all by the ruling elite, not to mention by the priests of the official Buddhist religion. The prehistoric practices of shamanism lived on, largely unregulated and hardly-at-all disguised beneath the outward trappings of Buddhism. Even though Buddhists had tried to supplant the native forms of shamanism over a thousand years before David-Neel arrived, these ancient magical traditions survived nonetheless. They are still barely alive today, preserved as *Bonpo*, or simply referred to as the “old *Bon* religion.”

Not only did David-Neel find that the magic of prehistoric shamanism had survived, but she further notes that the older, more magical practices of Buddhism were still well-preserved there at the time. She encountered older forms of Buddhism that had since disappeared from the rest of the civilized world.

A Zen monk might tell you today that Buddhists do not believe in Gods, daemons, and magic wands, but that is a modernistic misrepresentation of the Buddhist tradition. The Buddha did indeed practice magic! In addition to his teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the doctrines on emptiness, he also taught Tantra. Tantric Buddhism is a thread of his legacy that is no longer very common today because it has been frowned upon by the more orthodox schools of religion. Tantra is a system of rituals, incantations, and daemonic visualizations, complete with enchanted daggers, ceremonial bells, skulls, and other necromantic implements.

The Buddha taught this kind of magic to select disciples, and many practitioners today consider Tantra to be the highest form of his teachings. Much of the Tantric tradition in Buddhism has been blacklisted and preached against throughout history, *essentially because it has very little to do with being a good citizen and much more because it has to do with the magical rites of personal transformation and self-empowerment*. Indeed, many believe that the ritual practices of Tantra are powerful enough to help a Buddhist achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. Tantra is very unlike the practices of other, more religious forms of Buddhism, which claim that enlightenment takes many lifetimes of good behavior to achieve.



The Buddha Besieged by Daemons (artist unknown)

David-Neel was a Buddhist herself, and she had heard one tale of a young Tibetan monk named Lodö who had learned an ancient ritual that he could use to conquer all fear. Armed with this ritual, he went out into the wilderness to summon a tiger spirit, known by the locals as Thags Yang. He strove to stand face-to-face with his fear of violent death — in the form of a devouring predator. The ritual, however, did not go so well. His body was later found mauled and half-eaten. An actual flesh-and-blood snow leopard had answered his summons and made a meal of him!

Madame David-Neel was a brave sort. Even after hearing of such tales, she was bold enough to take her walks alone, out in the dark of night, in the wilds of the Tibetan countryside. She hoped to encounter men such as Lodo, practicing the older, more shamanistic forms of her own Buddhist faith.

She was out walking one night in a desolate rocky landscape when she happened across a recluse who was chanting, ringing a bell, and blowing on a trumpet. This particular rite was known as *Chod*. David-Neel was familiar with this bizarre ritual. Her

European objectivity, however, had kept her from fully immersing herself in it. David-Neel was an eternally curious and scholarly person, so she approached silently to observe, hoping not to disturb the strange sorcerer. As she drew near, what she saw chilled her blood.

A dark shape crossed her path and slunk off into the darkness. It was a wolf! It had come sniffing around the magician's camp, for he had set up his tent next to the local village's charnel grounds. A dismembered corpse of a recently deceased man lay upon the bare stones, exposed to the sky, an offering to the vultures and other wild beasts. This was how the Tibetans disposed of their dead. The magician's *Chod* ritual was often practiced best in such forbidden and frightening places: not only in graveyards but also in dark caves, forests, and infamous historic places where disaster had struck.

A campfire illuminated the scene, and she beheld the magician in his camp. He was so emaciated that he had taken on a skeleton-like appearance. He wore the ragged and torn robe of a *naljorpa* (a sorcerer of the old *Bon* religion) with the toga of a Buddhist monk thrown over it for good measure. He rang a bell, chanted incantations, and alternately blew upon a *kangling* — a trumpet carved from a human femur. His eyes seemed vacant, staring at the spaces immediately about him as though he were addressing a horde of flesh-eating ghouls. “Come ye hungry ones, and you that ungratified desires torment.” He blew upon the trumpet, and the wolf crooned in answer, somewhere in the dark.

David-Neel thought that he must be starving himself out here in the wild, performing this macabre ritual while allowing himself to degenerate into one of the skeletons that lay before him on the funeral grounds. She couldn't stop herself. She strode up to him and entreated him to stop his ritual and take care of himself, saying that she had food and medicine back in her camp.

The young man stood wide-eyed and responded to her merely as though she were another ghoul. “Come angry one, feed on my flesh...drink my blood!” Her efforts to bring him out of his trance were of little use, and she walked away, chiding herself for interfering in the sacred ritual of a Tantric ascetic. She knew the rules of the practice, and the ritualist was not to be disturbed as he battled with his fears on his own terms. She left the magician's campsite that night with new level of respect for the non-

Western mind and its ability to enter such an ecstatic hallucinatory state, seemingly without the aid of psychoactive plants.

### The Problem with Evocation

The sorcerer that Madame David-Neel encountered was a remnant of something older than anything she had ever seen in Europe. He was of an ancient and nearly forgotten tradition, practicing a kind of magic that used to be common all around the world and that now has all but vanished.

The shamans of our prehistoric ancestry had a secret. They knew that mankind had inherited a nervous system that isolated the mind inside an alienated and confused bubble of ignorance. They knew that fear and desire had become the primary driving forces of our behavior, and that civilization only intensified those fears and desires, corralling us into a weakened and intimidated state. They knew we no longer held communion with the inner life force of the planet and that the living spirits of nature had ceased communicating with us. In short, they knew we had been cast out of the Garden. The road back to paradise, they said, is guarded by apparitions: by fearsome monsters and distracting images of temptation. And if we wished to return ourselves to our Edenic state, to our universal Mother, we must be willing to face those phantoms and defeat them. To do that we must undergo magical rites of initiation. Rituals in which the dramas of our fears and desires were conjured up and dealt with, and dispensed with decisively. They knew that we must do this so that we can find the hidden off switch to suffering and finally experience true happiness in this world.

Naturally, the rites of initiation that these shamans developed varied. They were mostly fearsome and frightening productions. Some of them were quite dangerous: scarification, being buried alive, near-drowning, painful tattooing procedures, male and female circumcision, body piercing, etc. Many of these practices are still with us today, albeit in a form that is somewhat weaker than the ancient, full-blown regalia of the sorcerer. Facing your deepest fears can be done in the imagination, or it can be done in the flesh. Ritual objects, costumes, magic circles, and other implements were often helpful. Psychoactive plants were also of great assistance.



Title-page art from From Christopher Marlowe's famous *\*Faustus\** play, 1631 ed.

Religion did eventually come along and corrupt the shamans' original intentions, turning the rituals of self-transformation into rituals of civility, conformity, and control. But even within the confines of Tantra and in the rebirth ceremonies of secret societies, the traditions of magic are not immune to the same kind of corruption that religion is known for. The sorcerers tried to adhere to the old ways, but they all too easily lost sight of their true calling. The kind of magic we often see in the European traditions, such as Hermeticism, often ignores spiritual transformation for the promise of power over one's imaginary enemies, or as a means of fortifying the ego against imaginary threats.

The difference between an enlightened magician and a deluded magician, I think, is best exemplified by the following two tarot cards.



Left: the Visconti di Modrone Tarot (15th Century) / Right: the Rider-Waite Tarot (1909)

In the first image, the magician reacts to the natural world by taking it at face value and beating it into submission. In the second, the magician is making peace with his or her fears and recovering humankind's inherent sense of unity with the natural world. The true initiate knows that the natural world, though it is most certainly "red in tooth and claw" some of the time, is primarily cooperative and peace-loving. All natural forces seek balance and harmony, and suffering in the face of the world is a needless affair.

*...and anyone who attempts to storm the gates of heaven through organizations and formulas must awake some time to the realization that he is a victim of a hallucination.*

— Manly P. Hall

Today, the uninitiated teenaged witch who's into casting spells, who has not done the arduous work of self-initiation, doesn't know that magic originally evolved as a means

of seeing through the outward appearances of fear and desire. That it evolved to reconnect humankind to the natural world, not necessarily for us to stand apart from it and control it. So she attempts to “cast spells” on her boyfriend or obsesses over the “black” and the “white” of her magic. Likewise, a modern-day ceremonial magician of the Golden Dawn tradition practices banishing rituals, as though to keep the “negative” forces of the world at bay. He becomes obsessed with visions of himself as an overseer of those forces — summoning, for example, the spirits of the Lesser Key of Solomon in hopes of forcing them into servitude. Whereas the shamanic formulas of our long lost ancestors were originally designed to get us out from under this kind of control-freak mentality, the strains of magic that developed later on often lost sight of that original intent. As a result, the modern-day occultist usually attempts to put magic into the service of his ego.

The control-freak mentality of modernity is not only evident in science, and in the modern-day abuses of technology. It is also evident in magic. And in the writings of prominent occultists. One of the most respected occult writers today is Israel Regardie, an initiate of England’s Golden Dawn tradition. Despite his immense knowledge and expertise as a Kabbalist and Hermetic ritualist, he was still apparently influenced by the control-freak brand of occultism that characterizes a magician blind to the shamanic roots of his own tradition.

In his classic text *The Tree of Life*, Regardie sings the praises of ancient magic: “...in it may be found the means to storm the gates of heaven by violence...” And in the same book, he discusses the practice of magical evocation: “It is only by giving [spirits] a visible appearance, by means of the incense particles and by evoking them into the magical Triangle, that the magician is able to dominate them and do with them as he pleases.”

And yet, Regardie also appears to realize that magic is more than just a science of domination and control. His words seem to hint that the magician’s attempt to boss around the forces of life may eventually lead to something else entirely. Evocation, he says, involves “the assimilation of a particular spirit into the consciousness of the Theurgist...by superior command and imperious gesture of Will. By this assimilation, the wound of Amfortas is healed, the deficiency is remedied, and the soul of the Theurgist is stimulated in a special way, according to the nature of the spirit.”

Amfortas is a character in a medieval Grail romance. He is the Grail king who is sick from a wound that will not heal. That wound is metaphorical. A gash between himself and nature. It consists of his belief that he is cut off from the Earth. In such a state, he becomes a tyrant, and his kingdom becomes a wasteland.

Regardie's reference to the "wound of Amfortas" shows us that the magician — whom Regardie refers to as the "theurgist" — is not trying to make an evoked spirit into a slave — as though it is something other than himself — but rather that he is attempting to make peace with it. To become one with it. To assimilate it back into his consciousness. He aims to absorb its power. To accomplish this kind of healing, he requires a special kind of remedy.

This last point is extremely important because it shows us what has gone wrong with magic since the time of the first shamans. Fear has driven many magical practitioners to use sorcery as a weapon. Or as a shield. Or as armor to separate themselves from the Earth. To reinforce the split between humankind and nature. To use magic as a means of controlling the world, as though the world is something "other" than themselves.

The Buddha himself fell victim to this mentality. He spent many years as a *samana*. "Samana" is a Sanskrit word that is the source of our modern word "shaman." Unfortunately, the *samanas* of the Buddha's time had already lost sight of their primeval shamanic roots. Their shamanic science of yoga had become contaminated by fear and desire. The Buddha almost died practicing their form of yoga, but he realized something important before it was too late.

The Buddha apparently found a way to restore the faulty yoga of his time back to an art and science of true magic. The remedy that he applied rescued not only himself but restored mysticism to full function again — and moreover, it made magical evocation once again tenable.

Before I disclose to you the secret of the raja — that is, a practical procedure of magical

Open in app ↗



Search Medium



Instead of ~~heat~~ you will impose a barrier against change instead of creating a path toward it.

In the next article, I will explore this remedy. And in addition, I will disclose two different methods of magical evocation. Stay tuned!



Spirituality

Magick

Shamanism

Buddhism

